

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 3, 7, 11, 13, 15 and 16 in accordance with the following:

1. (Previously Presented) A fusing device of an electrophotographic image forming apparatus, the device comprising:

a fusing unit which includes a heating portion, a fixing frame which fixes and supports the heating portion at one side, and a fusing film sliding along a circumference of the fixing frame, wherein the heating portion comprises a heat pipe, both ends of which are sealed and in which a predetermined amount of a working fluid is contained; and

a pressing roller which presses the fusing film to the heating portion to slide the fusing film;

wherein the heating portion is in contact with the pressing roller and forms a fusing nip portion having a predetermined width, and

wherein the heating portion further comprises:

an insulating material which surrounds the heat pipe;

a resistive coil which winds the insulating material and heats the heat pipe; and

a nip plate at a lower portion of the resistive coil to contact the pressing roller through the fusing film and to form the fusing nip portion.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) The device of claim ~~2~~1, wherein the nip plate is formed of a ceramic material selected from a group consisting of SiC, MgO, and Al₂O₃.

4. (Original) The device of claim 3, wherein the width of the nip plate at a printing route is 3-10 mm.

5. (Original) The device of claim 1, further comprising a heater which heats the pressing roller, is placed inside the pressing roller.

6. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein the heater is a halogen lamp.
7. (Currently Amended) The device of claim ~~2~~1, wherein one surface of the heat pipe is closely adhered to the nip plate to transfer heat to the nip plate.
8. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the fixing frame is manufactured by injection molding.
9. (Previously Presented) A method of fusing an electrophotographic image in an image forming apparatus, the method comprising:
 - heating a heating portion contiguous to a path over which a material having an electrophotographic image passes and controlling a heat of the heating portion by:
 - using a predetermined amount of a working fluid in a heat pipe of the heating portion to absorb heat;
 - fixing and supporting a fixing frame to facilitate sliding a fusing film along a circumference of the fixing frame;
 - pressing the fusing film to the heating portion to slide the fusing film so that a fusing nip portion having a predetermined width is formed, and
 - controlling a heat of the heating portion by:
 - using an insulating material to surround the heat pipe; and
 - using a resistive coil wound around the insulating material to heat the heat pipe,
 - wherein a nip plate at a lower portion of the resistive coil contacts a pressing roller through the fusing film to form the fusing nip portion.
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~40~~9, wherein the nip plate is formed of a ceramic material selected from a group consisting of SiC, MgO, and Al₂O₃.
12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the width of the nip plate at a printing route is 3-10 mm.
13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~40~~9, further including using a heater inside the pressing roller to heat the pressing roller.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the fusing unit uses a halogen lamp to heat the pressing roller.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~10~~ 9, including closely adhering a surface of the heat pipe to the nip plate to transfer heat to the nip plate.

16. (Currently Amended) A fusing device of an electrophotographic image forming apparatus, the device comprising:

a fusing unit which includes a heating portion, a fixing frame which fixes and supports the heating portion at one side, and a fusing film sliding along a circumference of the fixing frame;

a pressing roller which presses the fusing film to the heating portion to slide the fusing film, wherein the heating portion is in contact with the pressing roller and forms a fusing nip portion having a predetermined width; and

a nip plate to contact the pressing roller through the fusing film and to form the fusing nip portion,

wherein the heating portion comprises:

a heat pipe;

an insulating material surrounding the heat pipe; and

a resistive coil winding the insulating material and heating the heat pipe.